

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Character strings are extracted from a seed text which is inputted as a search condition for searching prestored object documents for a relevant document. Each object document is partitioned into a plurality of blocks, and character strings are extracted from each block. Similarity of each block to the seed text is calculated by comparing the character strings extracted from the block and the character strings extracted from the seed text. Whether or not each block is relevant to the seed text is judged by comparing the calculated similarity of the block with a preset threshold value. Based on the judgment, an "inclusion degree" of each object document (including the blocks) regarding the seed text is calculated, by which object documents relevant to the seed text are outputted.